

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13

OMB-01 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 SSC-01 SSM-03 EB-07 COME-00

/082 W

-----041013Z 064932 /17

R 040800Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 21

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

S E C R E T SANA 0046

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, YE

SUBJECT: CABINET SHUFFLE IN YAR

BEGIN SUMMARY: AS OF 30 DECEMBER 1976, LEFTIST FIGUREHEAD MINECON ALI LUTF AL-THAWR LOST HIS JOB TO FORMER HEAD OF NATIONAL WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY MOHAMMED AL-JABURI. LATTTER IS TECHNOCRAT, AND NOT A POLITICAL FIGURE AND SYMBOL LIKE AL-THAWR, BUT HIS APPOINTMENT SIGNALS ANOTHER MOVE RIGHT-WARD FOR YARG. IN UNANNOUNCED MOVE WHICH MAY HAVE MORE PERSONAL THAN POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE, YAHYA JAGHMAN WAS SIMULTANEOUSLY REMOVED AT DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ON CHARGES OF PETTY CORRUPTION. END SUMMARY.

1. ALI LUTF AL-THAWR HAS LONG HAD CACHET OF BEING ONE OF (AND RECENTLY THE CHIEF) LEFTIST IN CABINET BUT HIS MINISTRY ALSO ISSUED VERY LIBERAL LAW CONCERNING FOREIGN INVESTMENT AND ACTED IN OTHER WAYS TO ENLARGE ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR IN COMMERCE AND DEVELOPMENT THROUGH LICENSING (IN EFFECT, GIVING A MONOPOLY AND VARIOUS TAX ADVANTAGES) MERCHANTS TO SET UP SMALL PLANTS.

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MINISTRY PRESIDED OVER MIXED CORPORATIONS OF GOVERNMENT AND GOVERNMENT MONOPOLIES BUT DID LITTLE TO EXPAND THESE AGGRESSIVEELY AT EXPENSE OF PRIVATE SECTOR. IN FACT, IN LAST FEW MONTHS, MOST OBSERVERS HAVE EXPECTED STEPS FROMMINISTRY TO EXPAND ROLE WHICH AMBITIOUS AND WELL-FUNDED PRIVATE SECTOR COULD PLAY IN THESE CORPORATIONS. TO JUDGE BY MOST OBSERVERS, AL-THAWR

DID NOT LEAD OR TAKE PART IN MANY POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS, BUT HE SEEMED TO US TO REPRESENT A LEFTWING LOYALIST WHICH SOUGHT AN ENLARGED AND RESPECTABLE ROLE IN YARG WHICH WAS SWINGING TOWARD SAUDIS.

2. NEVERTHELESS, SAUDIS HAVE LONG SOUGHT OUSTER OF AL-THAWR, AND IRAQIS HAVE LONG SOUGHT HIS ELEVATION. BOTH STATES REPORTEDLY BACKED UP THEIR SUGGESTIONS WITH FINANCIAL INDUCEMENTS AND PUNISHMENTS.

3. NEW JOB FOR AL-THAWR HAD NOT BEEN ANNOUNCED, BUT WE HAVE HEARD HE WILL BE GIVEN ONE OF LUCRATIVE POSTS IN CHARGE OF MIXED CORPORATION. HE IS, IN ANY CASE, NOT FALLEN FROM GOVERNMENT (READ AL-HAMDI'S) FAVOR. IT IS LIKEWISE NOT RPT NOT POSSIBLE TO READ SAUDI VS IRAWI SUCCESS TO AL-THAWR SHIFT.

4. AL-JUBARI IS NOT POLITICAL FIGURE IN ANY SENSE OF WORD. HE IS ANOTHER SHAFI TECHNOCRAT, WITH AN ARAB UNIVERSITY DEGREE THAT GOES BACK TO THE TIME OF THE IMAM. HE HAS A PERSONAL REPUTATION AS A MAN WITH CONSERVATIVE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC VIEWS. HE HAS LONG WORKED CLOSELY AND WELL WITH AID, WHICH HAS VIRTUALLY BUILT HIS WATER AND SWERE DEPARTMENT FROM A PAPER ORGANIZATION TO ONE WHICH SPENDS A LOT OF MONEY AND HAS GROWING ACTIVITIES AND IMPACT. HE HAS BEEN IMPRESSED WITH US TRAINING WHICH AID HAS GIVEN HIS MINIONS, AND WITH THE BRIGHT AND US-TRAINED ALI AL-BAHR AS HIS DEPUTY IN MIN SECRET

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ECON, AL-JUBARI IS IN POQ TION TO OIN EFFECTIVELY IN CURRENT DEBATES ABOUT DIRECTION OF DEVELOPMENT, ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR, REFORM OF TAXES, AND WAYS TO CAPTU 4EMITTANCES, BUT AL-JUBARI IS NOT WELL LIKED IN YEMEN FOR NOTHING; HE IS ALSO A BIT LETHARGIC. WE DON'T EXPECT GRREAT THINGS OF HIM IN HIS NEW JOB.

5. THE JAGHMAN COUP IS NOT COMPLETELY UNEXPECTED. AL-ASNAJ AND AHMAD ABDU SAID WHO DETEST HIM HAVE PRE-DICTED IT REPEATEDLY. JAGHMAN, ALTHOUGH A KHAULANI, IS A DERACINATED FIGURE AS A RESULT OF HIS LONG DIPLO-MATIC EXPERIENCE ABROAD AND HIS AMERICAN WIFE. AS THE SON OF A POOR QADI, JAGHMAN HAS NO POLITICAL OR TRIBAL BASE OF HIS OWN IN YEMEN. HE IS CHARMING, WORDLY AND FULL OF BIG IDEAS. HE IS NOT A FORCEFUL ADMINIS-TRATOR, BUT EVEN SO, HIS FEW ATTEMPTS TO EXPAND HIS ECONOMIC AND FOREIGN POLICY ROLE (USUALLY AT THE EXPENSE OF AL-ASNAJ

OR AHMAD ABDU SAID) HAVE APPARENTLY ADDED
PREOFESSIONAL AGGRAVATION TO THERI IRE ABOUT JAGHMAN'S
"PEACOCK PERSONALITY". THE CHARM, THE GIFT OF LANGUAGE,
THE BACKSLAPPING MANNER OBVIOUSLY DIDN'T WORK ON SARDONIC
AL-HAMDI EITHER, ALTHOUGH THE LATTER MAY HAVE BEEN SWAYED
MORE BY AL-ASNAJ'S STORIES OF CORRUPTION AND INEFFECTUAL
FOLLOW-THROUGH OF CERTAIN PROJECTS.

6. IN ANY CASE, AL-HAMDI PERSONALLY CONFRONTED JAGHMAN
AT A RATHER LARGE MEETING WITH ACCUSATIONS OF PETTY
FINANCIAL ABUSES AND JAGHMAN, APPARENTLY WITH SOME
DIGNITY, SIMPLY SAID THAT HE WAS INNOCENT, BUT HAD NO
INTENTION OF CONTINUING TO TRY TO SERVE IF HE HAD LOST
AL-HAMDI'S CONFIDENCE. HE THEN TENDERED HIS RESIGNGNATION.

7. THE PRESIDENT, BY SEVERAL ACCOUNTS, IS MADDER AT
HAVING THE TABLES TURNED ON HIM IN PUBLIC THAN AT ANY
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STORIES OF FINANCIAL PECCADILLOS WHICH, IN ANY CASE,
ARE HARDLY AN ISOLATED PHENOMENON IN THIS GOVERNMENT.

8. THERE HAS BEEN NO ANNOUNCEMTNT OF THERESIGNATION
AND WE HAVE REPORTS THAT NO ONE IS GOING TO BE NAMED
TO REPLACE JAGHMAN, SO THERE IS ALWAYS THE POSSIBILITY
THAT HE WILL BE SUMMONED BACK TO THIS DUTIES BY AL-HAMDI
AFTER A COOLING OFF PERIOD. THE MORE LIKELY DEVELOP-
MENT, HOWEVER, WITH AL-ASNAJ AND SAID IN THE ASCENDENCY,
IS A POSTING TO AN EMBASSY ABROAD.

9. AL-HAMDI IS CERTAINLY ABLE (AND CLEARLY WILLING) TO
REACH INTO THE GOVERNMENT OF ABD AL-AZIZ ABD AL-GHAHANI
AND CHANGE PERSONNEL AT WILL. WE DON'T THINK, HOWEVER,
HE IS WILLING TO CHANGE THE GOVERNMENT COMPLETELY,
EVEN THOUGH MANY ABLE MINISTERS (LIKE AL-JUNAYD AND AL-
IRYANI) ARE TIRED AND WANT OUT. HE MAY HAVE CHOSEN TO
MOVE AGAINST JAGHMAN AT THIS POINT IN ORDER TO DISPATCH
A RIGHTIST AT THE SAME TIME ATHAT HE SHIFTS A LEFTIST,
BUT WE TEND TO THINK THAT THE TWO OVES ARE UNRELATED,
REFLECTING ON ONE HAND THE RIGHTIST SWING OF THE GOVERN-
MENT AND ON THE OTHER HAND THE PERSONAL DISLIKES AND
RIVALRIES OF AL-ASNAJ AND SAID.

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